



State of Wisconsin
Homeland Security Council

Department of Military Affairs
2400 Wright Street
Madison, WI 53704

Homeland Security Advisor

608-242-3000

Open Session Meeting Minutes

**Department of Military Affairs
Classroom 204**

**Monday, December 22, 2003
2:05 p.m. – 2:26 p.m.**

Members present: Chair Major General Albert Wilkening (DMA), David Collins (WSP), Ed Gleason (WEM), Mike Metcalf (CapPol), and Jim Warren (DCI).

Members absent or excused: Ken Baldwin (DHFS) and Dave Steingraber (OJA).

Alternates present: Tom Anderson (DHFS alternate), Mike Kunesch (OJA alternate), and Steven Sell (WSP alternate).

Others present: Randi Milsap (DMA Legal Counsel), Lynn Rasmussen (DMA staff), Al Shanks (WEM Staff), Colonel Steve Peterson (DMA staff), Colonel Jerry Olesen (DMA staff), Marc Schmidt (CapPol), and media representatives from local television and radio stations.

Quorum present.

2:05 p.m. – Convene in open session.

1. Announcements of Closed Session Discussion Action.

Chair Wilkening called the meeting to order and welcomed radio and television station representatives to the open session meeting of the Governor's Homeland Security Council. He gave a brief review of the Homeland Security Teleconference Call with Secretary Ridge on December 21, 2003; gave a roll-out of our information of alert notifications – raising the terror threat level from YELLOW (ELEVATED) to ORANGE (HIGH). Chair Wilkening introduced each Homeland Security Council member, who then gave their agency report. Chair Wilkening stated that because of the cooperation of everyone in the room, the notification process worked. In summary, he expressed great confidence in the terror alert system, indicated the Council is maturing, and that it is a work in progress.

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Chair Wilkening presented the highlights of Secretary Ridge's Teleconference call. The Threat Level was elevated to ORANGE (HIGH), due to a significant increase in the volume of chatter, credible intelligence reports, and strategic indicators. The possibility of attacks during the holiday season is up significantly. The language has rivaled or exceeded 9/11 levels. There are strong indicators that these could be simultaneous attacks, to include aircraft as vehicles of mass destruction. Our actions are to deter attacks, prevent attacks, and respond/recover. We are hard at work to increase the security in the nation.

Chair Wilkening reviewed the timeline of events on December 21, 2003. The alert notification started immediately. Ed Gleason effectively disseminated information to responders at 12:20 p.m. Alert messages were sent out through email to County Emergency Management, County Sheriffs, First Responders subgroup, Regional Response Team Chiefs, and Regional Emergency Management Directors. Officials in Milwaukee, Dane and Brown counties were personally contacted. The National Warning System (NAWAS) was used to convey the message. The alert message was also sent out through State Patrol District #1. The Regional Emergency Management Directors followed up with all counties. We're confident that all responded and that appropriate action was taken. The flow of information was rapid.

The Wisconsin Homeland Security Website was developed and contains necessary information and guidelines for the public. It was updated within a couple of hours of the raising of the threat level from YELLOW (ELEVATED) to ORANGE (HIGH).

States with particular vulnerability were told that they would be notified within 24 hours after the Press Conference was held; Wisconsin has not been notified and has not received any specific threats. Readiness is our mission and profession; we are prepared to respond.

- Q: How do you want the public to respond? What do you want the public to do?
- A: Governor Doyle has emphasized that the public should remain vigilant. The public should go about their normal business but should notify their first responders to make them aware of any suspicious activity. They should review the Wisconsin Homeland Security website and its guidelines and take appropriate actions.
- Q: What about tips that are received?
- A: The Homeland Security Council will relay and share tips. Most calls go through the 911 dispatch centers.
- Q: Will vacations / leaves be cancelled?
- A: That is an agency-level decision. The U.S. Department of Transportation Transportation Security Agency (TSA) has cancelled leave at the Federal level.
- Q: Can we expect longer delays at airports?

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- A: Yes, you can anticipate delays at public transportation sites. That is part of the process. Be patient.
- Q: We interviewed random residents on their thoughts about the change from YELLOW to ORANGE. How can you assure the citizens?
- A: Citizens should proceed normally with their holiday season plans and celebrations, but should remain ever vigilant. Check the Wisconsin Homeland Security website for guidance.
- Q: What can you say to reassure the public?
- A: No specific threats have been identified in Wisconsin but we are taking this seriously. Citizens are our most precious asset. We continue to assess the situation.
- Q: What is considered suspicious activity?
- A: People loitering in areas. A package/box/equipment/vehicle not normally in the area should be reported to the police or the FBI.
- Q: Is Wisconsin ready?
- A: I have great confidence in our response capability. I have confidence in Wisconsin Emergency Management's ability to respond to manmade disasters. I have the utmost confidence in the Homeland Security Council members and our outreach agencies. We will continue to refine the systems already in place.
- Q: Is there a specific warning for the trucking industry? Specifically, fuel trucks?
- A: I saw an item on fuel trucks in Erie, PA on CNN last night. There is no connection to Wisconsin.
- Q: What about any other Midwest states?
- A: Our mission is to focus on Wisconsin. We do receive a wealth of information from the Department of Homeland Security.
- Q: What do you mean by the Council is maturing and a work in progress?

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- A: We always want to improve communications. Interoperability is on the top of the list for future communications. The key is to notify people as quickly as possible, followed up with phonecalls. We're looking downstream at National Guard Civil Support Teams and their capabilities. News/broadcasters helps us by getting the information out to the public.

General Wilkening thanked the media for coming and thanked all the members of the Homeland Security Council.

2. Public comments.

No other comments from the Council, the media or the public.

3. Set date, time and place of next meeting.

The next meeting will be TBA.

4. Adjournment.

A motion was made by Steve Sell and seconded by Tom Anderson to adjourn the meeting. **Motion carried.**

2:26 p.m. – Meeting Adjourned.